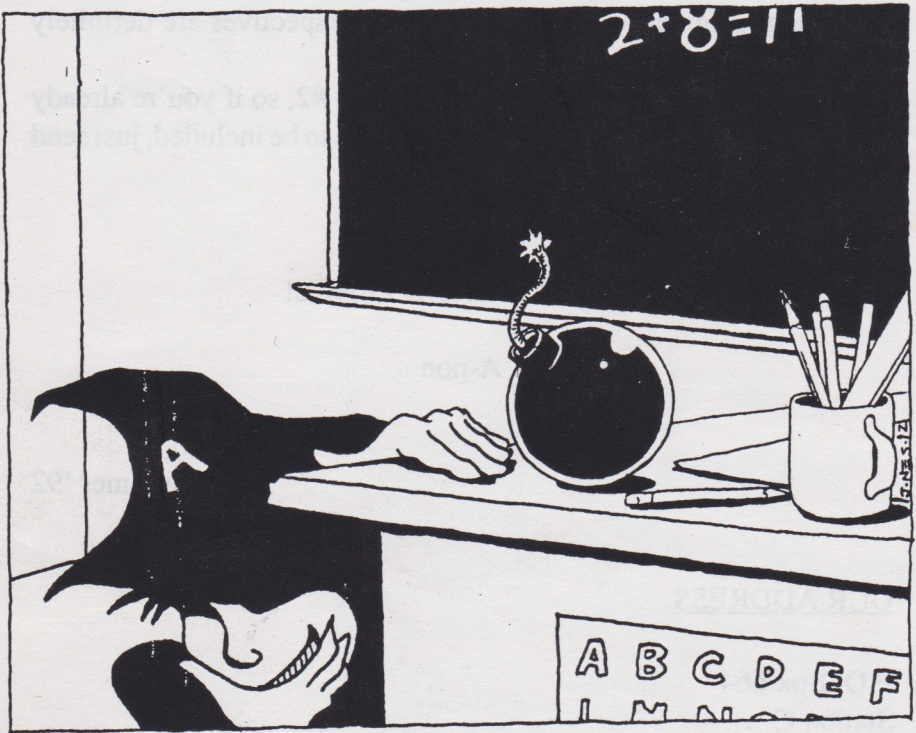


# ANTIARCHY

101



· AN INTRODUCTORY ANTHOLOGY ·

— #1 —



## A FEW WORDS

Hi! Welcome to the first issue of "Anarchy 101", a sort of small political primer. Basically, this is a look at some examples of anarchist theory and writings, useful if you wish to understand the thinking behind the circled A's. Of course, this doesn't begin to cover all the elements or ideals involved, as there are as many definitions of anarchy as there are anarchists. But it is a start.

The best way to find out more is to get involved. So if you would like to get in touch with an anarchist group nearby, write to us and maybe we can help. Also, please send along any of your comments, criticisms or writing (original or otherwise). Fresh perspectives are definitely appreciated.

A more extensive contact list will appear in #2, so if you're already involved in a group or project and would like to be included, just send along some info, samples, etc...

That's all for now. Until next time,

## ANARCHY AND PEACE!

A-non

summer '92

## OUR ADDRESS

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## "EVERYTHING YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT ANARCHISM..."

*This first article was taken from a pamphlet entitled "Everthing You Ever Wanted To Know About Anarchism But Were Afraid To Ask" published by three British anarchist groups (Black Sheep Publications, Dark Star, and Rebel Press) in 1988. One of many similar pamphlets, it serves as a good introduction to some of the general ideas involved in anarchism.*

There is probably more rubbish talked about anarchism than any other political idea. Actually, it has nothing to do with a belief in chaos, death and destruction. Anarchists do not normally carry bombs, nor do they ascribe any virtue to beating up old ladies.

It is no accident that the sinister image of the mad anarchist is so accepted. The State, the press and all the assorted authoritarian types, use every means at their disposal to present anarchy as an unthinkable state of carnage and chaos. We can expect little else from power-mongers who would have no power to monger if we had our way. They have to believe that authority and obedience are essential in order to justify their own crimes to themselves. The TV, press and films all preach obedience, and when anarchy is mentioned at all, it is presented as mindless destruction.

The alleged necessity of authority is so firmly planted in the average mind that anarchy, which means simply 'no government' is almost unthinkable to most people. The same people, on the other hand, will admit that rules, regulations, taxes, officiousness and abuse of power (to name but a few) are irritating to say the least. These things are usually thought to be worth suffering in silence because the alternative — no power, no authority, everybody doing what they pleased — would be horrible. It would be anarchy.

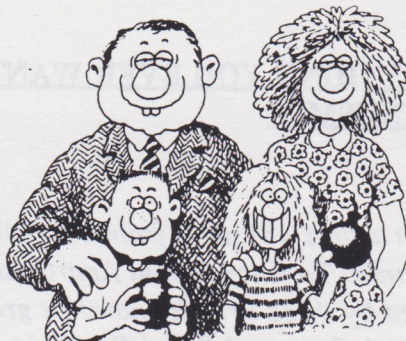
Yet there are a limitless range of possible societies without the State. Not all of them would be unpleasant to live in. Quite the contrary! Any kind of anarchist society would at least be spared the horrible distortions the State produces. The 'negative' side of anarchism — abolition of the State — has to be balanced against what replaces it — a society of freedom and free co-operation.

Various sorts of anarchists have differing ideas on exactly how society ought to be organised. They all agree that the State must be





POPULAR MISCONCEPTION  
OF TYPICAL ANARCHIST



ACTUAL ANARCHISTS  
IN REAL LIFE.

replaced by a society without classes and without force. It is because of this belief in freedom that we are reluctant to put forward a rigid blueprint. We offer only possible models backed up by evidence drawn from life. Actually, there has already been an anarchist society and it took nothing less than mass murder to stop it.

Another common misunderstanding from those who know slightly more about it, is that anarchism is a nice daydream, a beautiful but impractical idea. In fact, the anarchist movement has a long history and it arose not in the heads of ivory tower philosophers, but directly, from the practical struggle for survival of masses of ordinary, downtrodden people. It has always been intensely practical in its concerns and its ways of doing things. The movement has come quite close to success a few times. If it is really so hopelessly impractical, then why is the State so determined to stamp it out?

## Elementary anarchism

Very few people seem to understand anarchism, even though it is a very simple, straightforward idea. It can be expressed basically as running our own lives instead of being pushed around.

There is nothing complicated or threatening about anarchism, except the fearsome arguments it can get you into. Such as the one about the chaos there would be if everyone did just what they wanted. But we have chaos already don't we? Millions are out of work, whilst others do too much boring, repetitive labour. People starve at the same time as food is being dumped into the sea to keep prices up. Our air is choked by the fumes from cars that contain only one person. The list of crazy, chaotic things that happen is endless.



Even the 'good' things that the State does are actually harmful. The Health Service, for example, patches us up just like an industrial repair shop — which in a sense it is. It serves to make us dependent on the State and, worst of all, it buys us off cheaply. It prevents us from creating the genuine, self-managed Health Service we need, geared to our needs not theirs.

Authorities by their very nature can only interfere and impose things. Surely, ordinary people can figure out some way of coping, without planners knocking down their houses to build yet more empty office blocks? It is a basic anarchist principle that only people who live in an area have the right to decide what happens there.

All this chaos, we believe, arises from authority and the State. Without the ruling class and its need to keep us in bondage, there would be no State. Without the State we would be in a position to organise freely for our *own* ends. Surely we couldn't make a worse mess than we are stuck with already? Free organisation could provide a much greater orderliness than a society that concentrates on the systematic robbery and suppression of the majority of its members.

### **Some common arguments against anarchism**

We are often asked how an anarchist society would deal with, for instance, murderers. Who would stop them without the police?

Most murders are crimes of passion and therefore unpreventable by police or anyone else. Hopefully, however, in a saner, less frustrating society such 'crimes' would be less common.

Our rulers claim to be protecting us from each other. Actually they are more interested in protecting themselves and 'their' property from us.

If we, as members of a local community, owned and shared all resources it would become absurd to steal. An important motive for crime would be abolished.

These local communities would need to develop some means of dealing with individuals who harmed others. Instead of a few thousand professional police there would be 57 million in the 'United Kingdom' alone. Ultimately, our only protection is each other.

Prisons fail to improve or reform anyone. Local people aware of each others' circumstances would be able to apply more suitable solutions, in keeping with the needs of the victim and the offender. The present penal system, on the other hand, *creates* criminal behaviour. Long term prisoners are often rendered incapable of surviving outside an institution that makes all their decisions for them. How is locking people up with others of an anti-social turn of mind (the worst of whom are the screws) supposed to develop



responsibility and reasonable behaviour? Of course it does just the opposite. The majority of prisoners re-offend.

Another question anarchists have had thrown at them for years is: "But who would do all the dirty and unpleasant jobs?". We imagine each community would devise its own rota system. What is so impossible about that?

Then there's the question: "But what about those who refuse to work?". Well, social pressure can be applied. People could, for example, be 'sent to Coventry', i.e. ignored. In drastic cases they could be expelled from the community.

But people *need* to work. People have a definite need for creative activity. Notice how many people spend their time working on cars or motor bikes, in gardening, making clothes, creating music. These are all creative activities that can be enjoyable. They are usually thought of as hobbies rather than work, since we're brought up to think of work as a torment to be endured.

In this society of course, work *is* a torment. Naturally, we hate it. This does not mean that we are naturally lazy, it means that we resent being treated like machines, compelled to do mostly meaningless work for someone else's benefit. Work does not have to be like that — and if it were controlled by the people who had to do it, it certainly would not be.

Of course some jobs just have to be done, and there are few methods in sight of making collecting rubbish a fun occupation. Everybody would have to take a share and everybody would have to see to it that nobody got away with shirking their responsibilities.

A further point worth making is that unemployment is only a problem created by capitalism. In a sensible world there would be no unemployment. Everyone would have a shorter working week, because they would only produce things that were needed. If we were to get rid of the parasitic ruling class, we would be free of most of the economic pressure to work.

If you still need to be convinced that an anarchist society could solve the problem of people failing to meet their responsibilities, then imagine yourself being compelled to face a meeting of the whole community you live in and being publicly discussed as a problem. Ugh!

Yet another common objection is: "Well, perhaps it would work on a peasant village scale, but how can you run a complex industrial society without the authority of managers?". Well, in the first place, we believe that society needs to be broken down to smaller-scale units as much as possible, so as to make them comprehensible to small groups of ordinary people. It is a noticeable fact of organisation, as well as a basic principle of



anarchist theory, that small groups of people can work efficiently together, and co-ordinate with other such groups; whereas large formless groups are gullible and easily dominated. Expanding this point it is interesting to note that recently the famous 'economies of scale' that justify steel works, for example, covering many square miles, have been increasingly called into question. Beyond a certain point factories, farms, administrative systems and so on, actually get much less efficient as they get larger.

As much as is reasonably possible should be produced and consumed locally. Some facilities, however, would have to be dealt with on a regional or even larger scale. There is no insoluble problem about this, in fact solutions were found by the Spanish working class in the thirties. The Barcelona Bus Company doubled services, made generous contributions to the City Entertainments Collective and produced guns for the front in the bus workshops. All this was achieved with a smaller workforce, as many had left to fight the fascists. This amazing increase in efficiency, despite the war and serious shortages of essential supplies, is not surprising on reflection — after all, who can best run a bus company? Obviously bus workers.

All the Barcelona workers were organised into syndicates — groups of workers in the same enterprise, sub-divided into work groups. Each group made its own day-to-day decisions and appointed a delegate to represent their views on wider issues concerning the whole factory, or even the whole region. Each of the delegates was instructed in what to say by their workmates and the task of being a delegate was frequently rotated. Delegates could be changed at short notice if it was felt they were getting out of line (the principle of recallability). These show the basic anarchist principles of free federation in practice. By adding more levels of delegation it is possible to cope with organising activity on any scale, without anyone giving up their freedom to work as they choose. This idea of federalism is illustrated again in a later section called 'Local action and organisation'.

Let's move on to another objection — "Wouldn't a society without a State have no defence from attack by foreign states?"

Well, it must be said that having a State hasn't prevented us from being taken over by the US Empire. In fact 'our own' armed forces are used against us as an army of occupation. The State does not defend us. It uses us as cannon fodder to defend our rulers, who, if the truth be untangled, are our real enemies.

Returning to the question, a classic anarchist answer is to arm the people. Anarchist militias in Spain very nearly won the civil



war despite shortages of weapons, treachery by the Communists and intervention by Germany and Italy. Where they made their mistake was in allowing themselves to be integrated into an army run by statists. An armed population would be difficult to subdue.

But yes, we could be destroyed. We believe that the real nuclear threat is from 'our side'. The American rulers would probably exterminate us all rather than willingly allow us our freedom.

Against the threat of destruction our best defence is the revolutionary movement in other countries. Put another way, our best defence against the Russian nuclear bomb is the current movement of the Polish workers. This may well spread to the rest of the Soviet Empire. Conversely their best hope of not being vapourised is that we might succeed in abolishing 'our' bomb. (CND has not yet realised that banning the megadeath weapons means banning the State!)

It is instructive how the Russian revolution was saved from wholesale British intervention by a series of mutinies and 'blackings' by British workers.

True security would be guaranteed if we could develop our international contacts to the point where we can be sure that the workers in each 'enemy' country will not allow their rulers to attack us.

## Anarchism in action

If you have followed this pamphlet so far, you should have a fairly reasonable idea of what an anarchist society is. The problem is how to get from here to there.

Within anarchism there are many different but related ideas. There are complete systems of anarchist political theory going by names like federalism, mutualism, individualism, syndicalism, anarchist-communism, anarcha-feminism, situationism, and so on.





The arguments between different brands of anarchism have been going on for a long time and are too involved for an introductory pamphlet.

However, if we think in terms of what anarchism says needs to be done now, it turns out that there is considerable agreement between brands. Each strand emphasises the importance of action in a particular area of life.

If you begin to put the ideas of the following pages into practice, you will start to work out your own version of anarchism. By doing this you will be adding a new member to a movement that always needs new members, particularly ones who have thought things through. Try your ideas out on your friends, read more on anarchism, talk with other anarchists!

*Be an independent thinker. There is no other sort.*





## "THE ABC OF ANARCHISM"

*The next piece is from Alexander Berkman's book "The ABC of Anarchism" (chapters #1,3, and 4), reprinted by Freedom Press. Berkman was a Russian-American activist who, in 1892, gained notoriety by attempting the assassination of the oppressive factory-owner Henry C. Frick. Though it was written in 1929, the book still remains an important piece of radical literature. However, please excuse it's sexist grammar ('mankind', etc...) as it was typical of most writing at that time.*

### **I : Introduction**

I want to tell you about anarchism.

I want to tell you what anarchism is, because I think it is well you should know it. Also because so little is known about it, and what is known is generally hearsay and mostly false.

I want to tell you about it, because I believe that anarchism is the finest and biggest thing man has ever thought of; the only thing that can give you liberty and well-being, and bring peace and joy to the world.

I want to tell you about it in such plain and simple language that there will be no misunderstanding it. Big words and high-sounding phrases serve only to confuse. Straight thinking means plain speaking.

But before I tell you what anarchism is, I want to tell you what it is *not*.

That is necessary because so much falsehood has been spread about anarchism. Even intelligent persons often have entirely wrong notions about it. Some people talk about anarchism without knowing a thing about it. And some lie about anarchism, because they don't want you to know the truth about it.

Anarchism has many enemies; they won't tell you the truth about it. Why anarchism has enemies and who they are, you will see later, in the course of this story. Just now I can tell you that neither your political boss nor your employer, neither the capitalist nor the policeman will speak to you honestly about anarchism. Most of them know nothing about it, and all of them hate it. Their newspapers and publications—the capitalistic press—are also against it.

Even most socialists and Bolsheviks misrepresent anarchism. True, the majority of them don't know any better. But those who do know better also often lie about anarchism and speak of it as "disorder and chaos." You can see for yourself how dishonest they are in this: the greatest teachers of socialism—Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels—had taught that anarchism would come from Socialism. They said that we must first have socialism, but that after socialism there will be anarchism, and that it would be a freer and more beautiful condition of society to live in than socialism. Yet the socialists, who swear by



Marx and Engels, insist on calling anarchism "chaos and disorder," which shows you how ignorant or dishonest they are.

The Bolsheviks do the same, although their greatest teacher, Lenin, had said that anarchism would follow Bolshevism, and that then it will be better and freer to live.

Therefore I must tell you, first of all, what anarchism is *not*.

It is *not* bombs, disorder, or chaos.

It is *not* robbery and murder.

It is *not* a war of each against all.

It is *not* a return to barbarism or to the wild state of man.

*Anarchism is the very opposite of all that.*

Anarchism means that you should be free; that no one should enslave you, boss you, rob you, or impose upon you.

It means that you should be free to do the things you want to do; and that you should not be compelled to do what you don't want to do.

It means that you should have a chance to choose the kind of a life you want to live, and live it without anybody interfering.

It means that the next fellow should have the same freedom as you that every one should have the same rights and liberties.

It means that all men are brothers, and that they should live like brothers, in peace and harmony.

That is to say, that there should be no war, no violence used by one set of men against another, no monopoly, and no poverty, no oppression, no taking advantage of your fellow-man.

In short, anarchism means a condition of society where all men and women are free, and where all enjoy equally the benefits of an ordered and sensible life.

"Can that be?" you ask; "and how?"

"Not before we all become angels," your friend remarks.

Well, let us talk it over. Maybe I can show you that we can be decent and live as decent folks even without growing wings.

### 3: What is Anarchism?

"Can you tell us briefly," your friend asks, "what anarchism really is?"

I shall try. In the fewest words, anarchism teaches that we can live in a society where there is no compulsion of any kind.

A life without compulsion naturally means liberty; it means freedom from being forced or coerced, a chance to lead the life that suits you best.

You cannot lead such a life unless you do away with the institutions that curtail your liberty and interfere with your life, the condition that compels you to act differently from the way you really would like to.

What are those institutions and conditions? Let us see what we have to do away with in order to secure a free and harmonious life. Once we know what has to be abolished and what must take its place, we shall also find the way to do it.

What must be abolished, then, to secure liberty?

First of all, of course, the thing that invades you most, that handicaps or prevents your free activity; the thing that interferes with your liberty and compels you to live differently from what would be your own choice.



That thing is government.

Take a good look at it and you will see that government is the greatest invader ; more than that, the worst criminal man has ever known of. It fills the world with violence, with fraud and deceit, with oppression and misery. As a great thinker once said, "its breath is poison." It corrupts everything it touches.

"Yes, government means violence and it is evil," you admit ; "but can we do without it ?"

"That is just what we want to talk over. Now, if I should ask you whether *you* need government, I'm sure you would answer that you don't, but that it is for the others that it is needed.

But if you should ask any one of those "others," he would reply as you do: he would say that he does not need it, but that it is necessary "for the others."

Why does everyone think that he can be decent enough without the policeman, but that the club is needed for "the others ?"

People would rob and murder each other if there were no government and no law," you say.

If they really would, *why* would they ? Would they do it just for the pleasure of it or because of certain reasons. Maybe if we examine their reasons, we'd discover the cure for them.

Suppose you and I and a score of others had suffered shipwreck and found ourselves on an island rich with fruit of every kind. Of course, we'd get to work to gather the food. But suppose one of our number should declare that it all belongs to him, and that no one shall have a single morsel unless he first pays him tribute for it. We would be indignant, wouldn't we ? We'd laugh at his pretensions. If he'd try to make trouble about it, we might throw him into the sea, and it would serve him right, would it not ?

Suppose, further, that we ourselves and our forefathers had cultivated the island and stocked it with everything needed for life and comfort, and that someone should arrive and claim it all as his. What would we say ? We'd ignore him, wouldn't we ? We might tell him that he could share with us and join us in our work. But suppose that he insists on his ownership and that he produces a slip of paper and says that it proves that everything belongs to him ? We'd tell him he's crazy and we'd go about our business. But if he should have a government back of him, he would appeal to it for the protection of "his rights," and the government would send police and soldiers who would evict us and put the "lawful owner in possession."

That is the function of government ; that is what government exists for and what it is doing all the time.

Now, do you still think that without this thing called government we should rob and murder each other.

Is it not rather true that *with* government we rob and murder ? Because government does not secure us in our rightful possessions, but on the contrary takes them away for the benefit of those who have no right to them, as we have seen in previous chapters.\*

If you should wake up tomorrow morning and learn that there is no government any more, would your first thought be to rush into the street, and kill some one ? No, you know that is nonsense. We speak of sane, normal men. The insane man belongs to the care of physicians and alienists ; they should be placed in hospitals to be treated for their malady.



The chances are that if you or Johnson should awaken to find that there is no government, you would get busy arranging your life under the new conditions.

It is very likely, of course, that if you should then see people gorge themselves while you go hungry, you would demand a chance to eat, and you would be perfectly right in that. And so would every one else, which means that people would not stand for any one hogging all the good things of life; they would want to share in them. It means further that the poor would refuse to stay poor while others wallow in luxury. It means that the worker will decline to give up his product to the boss who claims to "own" the factory and everything that is made there. It means that the farmer will not permit thousands of acres to lie idle while he has not enough soil to support himself and family. It means that no one will be permitted to monopolise the land or the machinery of production. It means that the private ownership of the *sources of life* will not be tolerated any more. It will be considered the greatest crime for some to own more than they can use in a dozen lifetimes, while their neighbours have not enough bread for their children. It means that all men will share in the social wealth, and that all will help to produce that wealth.

It means, in short, that for the first time in history right, justice and equality would triumph instead of law.

You see therefore that doing away with government also signifies the abolition of monopoly and of personal ownership of the means of production and distribution.

It follows that when government is abolished, wage slavery and capitalism must also go with it, because they cannot exist without the support and protection of government. Just as the man who would claim a monopoly of the island, of which I spoke before, could not put through his crazy claim without the help of government.

Such a condition of things where there would be liberty instead of government would be *Anarchy*. And where equality of use would take the place of private ownership, would be *Communism*.

It would be *Communist Anarchism*.

"Oh, Communism," your friend exclaims, "but you said you were not a Bolshevik!"

No, I am not a Bolshevik, because the Bolsheviks want a powerful government or state, while anarchism means doing away with the state or government altogether.

"But are not the Bolsheviks Communists?" you demand.

Yes, the Bolsheviks are Communists, but they want their dictatorship, their government, to compel people to live in Communism. Anarchist communism, on the contrary, means voluntary communism, communism from free choice.

"I see the difference. It would be fine, of course," your friend admits. "But do you really think it possible?"







## 4 : Is Anarchy possible ?

"It might be possible," you say, "if we could do without government. But can we?"

Perhaps we can best answer your question by examining your own life.

What role does the government play in your existence? Does it help you live? Does it feed, clothe, and shelter you? Do you need it to help you work or play? If you are ill, do you call the physician or the policeman? Can the government give you greater ability than nature endowed you with? Can it save you from sickness, old age, or death?

Consider your daily life and you will find that in reality the government is no factor in it at all except when it begins to interfere with your affairs, when it compels you to do certain things or prohibits you from doing others. It forces you, for instance, to pay taxes and support it, whether you want to or not. It makes you don a uniform and join the army. It invades your personal life, orders you about, coerces you, prescribes your behaviour, and generally treats you as it pleases. It tells you even what you must believe and punishes you for thinking and acting otherwise. It directs you what to eat and drink, and imprisons or shoots you for disobeying. It commands you and dominates every step of your life. It treats you as a bad boy, as an *irresponsible* child who needs the strong hand of a guardian, but if you disobey it holds you *responsible*, nevertheless.

We shall consider later the details of life under anarchy and see what conditions and institutions will exist in that form of society, how they will function, and what effect they are likely to have upon man.

For the present we want to make sure first that such a condition is possible, that anarchy is practicable.

What is the existence of the average man today? Almost all your time is given to earning your livelihood. You are so busy making a living that you hardly have time left to live, to enjoy life. Neither the time nor the money. You are lucky if you have some source of support, some job. Now and then comes slack-time: there is unemployment and thousands are thrown out of work, every year, in every country.

That time means no income, no wages. It results in worry and privation, in disease, desperation, and suicide. It spells poverty and crime. To alleviate that poverty we build homes of charity, poor-houses, free hospitals, all of which you support with your taxes. To prevent crime and to punish criminals it is again you who have to support police, detectives, State forces, judges, lawyers, prisons, keepers. Can you imagine anything more senseless and impractical? The legislatures pass laws, the judges interpret them, the various officials execute them, the police track and arrest the criminal, and finally the prison warden gets him into custody. Numerous persons and institutions are busy keeping the jobless man from stealing and punish him if he tries to. Then he is provided with the means of existence, the lack of which had made him break the law in the first place. After a shorter or longer term he is turned loose. If he fails to get work he begins the same round of theft, arrest, trial, and imprisonment all over again.



This is a rough but typical illustration of the stupid character of our system; stupid and inefficient. Law and government support that system.

Is it not peculiar that most people imagine we could not do without government, when in fact our real life has no connection with it whatever, no need of it, and is only interfered with where law and government step in?

"But security and public order," you object, "could we have that without law and government? Who will protect us against the criminal?"

The truth is what is called "law and order" is really the worst disorder, as we have seen in previous chapters.\* What little order and peace we do have is due to the good commonsense of the joint efforts of the people, mostly in spite of the government. Do you need government to tell you not to step in front of a moving automobile? Do you need it to order you not to jump off the Brooklyn Bridge or from the Eiffel Tower?

Man is a social being: he cannot exist alone; he lives in communities or societies. Mutual need and common interests result in certain arrangements to afford us security and comfort. Such co-working is free, voluntary; it needs no compulsion by any government. You join a sporting club or a singing society because your inclinations lie that way, and you co-operate with the other members without any one coercing you. The man of science, the writer, the artist, and the inventor seek their own kind for inspiration and mutual work. Their impulses and needs are their best urge: the interference of any government or authority can only hinder their efforts.

All through life you will find that the needs and inclinations of people make for association, for mutual protection and help. That is the difference between managing things and governing men; between doing something from free choice and being compelled. It is the difference between liberty and constraint, between anarchism and government, because anarchism means voluntary co-operation instead of forced participation. It means harmony and order in place of interference and disorder.

"But who will protect us against crime and criminals?" you demand.

Rather ask yourself whether government really protects us against them. Does not government itself create and uphold conditions which make for crime? Does not the invasion and violence upon which all governments rest cultivate the spirit of intolerance and persecution, of hatred and more violence? Does not crime increase with the growth of poverty and injustice fostered by government? Is not government itself the greatest injustice and crime?

Crime is the result of economic conditions, of social inequality, of wrongs and evils of which government and monopoly are the parents. Government and law can only punish the criminal. They neither cure nor prevent crime. The only real cure for crime is to abolish its causes, and this the government can never do because it is there to preserve those very causes. Crime can be eliminated only by doing away with the conditions that create it. Government cannot do it.

Anarchism means to do away with those conditions. Crimes resulting from government, from its oppression and injustice, from inequality and poverty, will disappear under anarchy. These constitute by far the greatest percentage of crime.



Certain other crimes will persist for some time, such as those resulting from jealousy, passion, and from the spirit of coercion and violence which dominates the world today. But these, the offspring of authority and possession, will also gradually disappear under wholesome conditions with the passing away of the atmosphere that cultivated them.

Anarchy will therefore neither breed crime nor offer any soil for its thriving. Occasional anti-social acts will be looked upon as survivals of former diseased conditions and attitudes, and will be treated as an unhealthy state of mind rather than of crime.

Anarchy would begin by feeding the "criminal" and securing him work instead of first watching him, arresting, trying and imprisoning him, and finally ending by feeding him and the many others who have to watch and feed him. Surely even this example shows how much more sensible and simpler life would be under anarchism than now.

The truth is, present life is impractical, complex and confused, and not satisfactory from any point of view. That is why there is so much misery and discontent. The worker is not satisfied; nor is the master happy in his constant anxiety over "bad times" involving loss of property and power. The spectre of fear for tomorrow dogs the steps of poor and rich alike.

Certainly the worker has nothing to lose by a change from government and capitalism to a condition of no government, of anarchy.

The middle classes are almost as uncertain of their existence as the workers. They are dependent upon the goodwill of the manufacturer and wholesaler, of the large combines of industry and capital, and they are always in danger of bankruptcy and ruin.

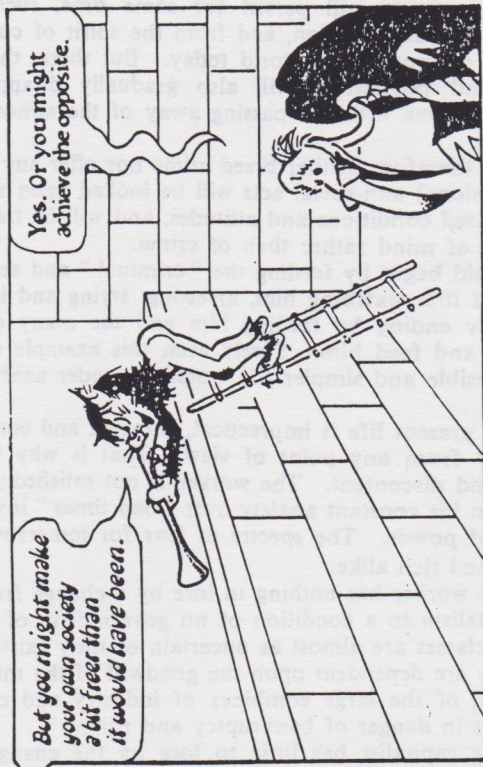
Even the big capitalist has little to lose by the changing of the present-day system to one of anarchy, for under the latter every one would be assured of his living and comfort; the fear of competition would be eliminated with the abolition of private ownership. Every one would have full and unbindered opportunity to live and enjoy his life to the utmost of his capacity.

Add to this the consciousness of peace and harmony; the feeling that comes with freedom from financial or material worries; the realisation that you are in a friendly world with no envy or business rivalry to disturb your mind; in a world of brothers; in an atmosphere of liberty and general welfare.

It is almost impossible to conceive of the wonderful opportunities which would open up to man in a society of communist anarchism. The scientist could fully devote himself to his beloved pursuits, without being harassed about his daily bread. The inventor would find every facility at his disposal to benefit humanity by his discoveries and inventions. The writer, the poet, the artist—all would rise on the wings of liberty and social harmony to greater heights of attainment.

Only then would justice and right come into their own. Do not underestimate the role of these sentiments in the life of man or nation. We do not live by bread alone. True, existence is not possible without opportunity to satisfy our physical needs. But the gratification of these by no means constitutes all of life. Our present system of civilisation has, by disinheriting millions, made the belly the centre of the universe, so to speak. But in a sensible society, with plenty for all, the matter of mere existence, the security of a livelihood would be considered self-evident and free as the air is for all. The





Yes. Or you might achieve the opposite.

But you might make your own society a bit freer than it would have been.



You won't achieve the free society by assassinating a tyrant.

Right. You won't achieve the free society by any quick method.



feelings of human sympathy, of justice and right would have a chance to develop, to be satisfied, to broaden and grow. Even today the sense of justice and fair play is still alive in the heart of man, in spite of centuries of repression and perversion. It has not been exterminated, it cannot be exterminated because it is inborn, innate in man, an instinct as strong as that of self-preservation, and just as vital to our happiness. For not all the misery we have in the world today comes from the lack of material welfare. Man can better stand starvation than the consciousness of injustice. The consciousness that you are treated unjustly will rouse you to protest and rebellion just as quickly as hunger, perhaps even quicker. Hunger may be the immediate cause of every rebellion or uprising, but beneath it is the slumbering antagonism and hatred of the masses against those at whose hands they are suffering injustice and wrong. The truth is that right and justice play a far more important role in our lives than most people are aware of. Those who would deny this know as little of human nature as of history. In every-day life you constantly see people grow indignant at what they consider to be an injustice. "That isn't right," is the instinctive protest of man when he feels wrong done. Of course, every one's conception of wrong and right depends on his tradition, environment and bringing up. But whatever his conception, his natural impulse is to resent what he thinks wrong and unjust.

Historically the same holds true. More rebellions and wars have been fought for ideas of right and wrong than because of material reasons. Marxists may object that our views of right and wrong are themselves formed by economic conditions, but that in no way alters the fact that the sense of justice and right has at all times inspired people to heroism and self-sacrifice on behalf of ideals.

The Christs and the Buddhas of all ages were not prompted by material considerations but by their devotion to justice and right. The pioneers in every human endeavour have suffered calumny, persecution, even death, not for motives of personal aggrandisement but because of their faith in the justice of their cause. The John Husses, the Luthers, Brunos, Savonarolas, Galileos and numerous other religious and social idealists fought and died championing the cause of right as they saw it. Similarly in paths of science, philosophy, art, poetry, and education men from the time of Socrates to modern days have devoted their lives to the service of truth and justice. In the field of political and social advancement, beginning with Moses and Spartacus, the noblest of humanity have consecrated themselves to ideals of liberty and equality. Nor is this compelling power of idealism limited only to exceptional individuals. The masses have always been inspired by it. The American War of Independence, for instance, began with popular resentment in the Colonies against the injustice of taxation without representation. The Crusades continued for two hundred years in an effort to secure the Holy Land for the Christians. This religious ideal inspired six millions of men, even armies of children, to face untold hardships, pestilence, and death in the name of right and justice. Even the late World War, capitalistic as it was in cause and result, was fought by millions of men in the fond belief that it was being waged for a just cause, for democracy and the termination of all wars.



So all through history, past and modern, the sense of right and justice has inspired man, individually and collectively, to deeds of self-sacrifice and devotion, and raised him far above the mean drabness of his every-day existence. It is tragic, of course, that this idealism expressed itself in acts of persecution, violence, and slaughter. It was the viciousness and self-seeking of king, priest, and master, ignorance and fanaticism which determined these forms. But the spirit that filled them was that of right and justice. All past experience proves that this spirit is ever alive and that it is a powerful and dominant factor in the whole scale of human life.

The conditions of our present-day existence weaken and vitiate this noblest trait of man, pervert its manifestation, and turn it into channels of intolerance, persecution, hatred, and strife. But once man is freed from the corrupting influences of material interests, lifted out of ignorance and class antagonism, his innate spirit of right and justice would find new forms of expression, forms that would tend toward greater brotherhood and goodwill, toward individual peace and social harmony.

Only under anarchy could this spirit come into its full development. Liberated from the degrading and brutalising struggle for our daily bread, all sharing in labour and well-being, the best qualities of man's heart and mind would have opportunity for growth and beneficial application. Man would indeed become the noble work of nature that he has till now visioned himself only in his dreams.

It is for these reasons that anarchy is the ideal not only of some particular element or class, but of all humanity, because it would benefit, in the larger sense, all of us. For anarchism is the formulation of a universal and perennial desire of mankind.

Every man and woman, therefore, should be vitally interested in helping to bring anarchy about. They would surely do so if they but understood the beauty and justice of such a new life. Every human being who is not devoid of feeling and common sense is inclined to anarchism. Every one who suffers from wrong and injustice, from the evil, corruption, and filth of our present-day life, is instinctively sympathetic to anarchy. Every one whose heart is not dead to kindness, compassion, and fellow-sympathy must be interested in furthering it. Every one who has to endure poverty and misery, tyranny and oppression should welcome the coming of anarchy. Every liberty and justice-loving man and woman should help realise it.

And foremost and most vitally of all, the subjected and submerged of the world must be interested in it. Those who build palaces and live in hovels; who set the table of life but are not permitted to partake of the repast; who create the wealth of the world and are disinherited; who fill life with joy and sunshine, and themselves remain scorned in the depths of darkness; the Samson of life shorn of his strength by the hand of fear and ignorance; the helpless Giant of labour, the proleteriats of brain and brawn, the industrial and agrarian masses—these should most gladly embrace anarchy.

It is to them that anarchism makes the strongest appeal; it is they who, first and foremost, must work for the new day that is to give them back their inheritance and bring liberty and well-being, joy and sunshine to the whole of mankind.

"A splendid thing," you remark; "but will it work? And how shall we attain it?"



## "ANARCHISM: THE FEMINIST CONNECTION"

*This article was written by the American author Peggy Kornegger in 1975. It was reprinted by Dark Star in their anthology "Quiet Rumours" and explains feminism as an essential part of the anarchist movement.*

Eleven years ago, when I was in a small-town Illinois high school, I had never heard of the word "anarchism" – at all. The closest I came to it was knowing that anarchy meant "chaos". As for socialism and communism, my history classes somehow conveyed the message that there was no difference between them and fascism, a word that brought to mind Hitler, concentration camps, and all kinds of horrible things which never happened in a free country like ours. I was subtly being taught to swallow the bland pabulum of traditional American politics: moderation, compromise, fence-straddling, Chuck Percy as wonder boy. I learned the lesson well: it took me years to recognize the bias and distortion which had shaped my entire "education". The "his-story" of mankind (white) had meant just that; as a woman I was relegated to a vicarious existence. As an anarchist I had no existence at all. A whole chunk of the past (and thus possibilities for the future) had been kept from me. Only recently did I discover that many of my disconnected political impulses and inclinations shared a common framework – that is, the anarchist or libertarian tradition of thought. I was like suddenly seeing red after years of colourblind grays.

Emman Goldman furnished me with my first definition of anarchism:

*Anarchism, then really stands for the liberation of the human mind from the dominion of religion; the liberation of the human body from the dominion of property; liberation from the shackles and restraint of government. Anarchism stands for a social order based on the free grouping of individuals for the purpose of producing real social wealth, an order that will guarantee to every human being free access to the earth and full enjoyment of the necessities of life, according to individual desires, tastes, and inclinations.<sup>1</sup>*

Soon, I started making mental connections between anarchism and radical feminism. It became very important to me to write down some of the perceptions in this area as a way of communicating to others the excitement I felt about anarcho-feminism. It seems crucial that we share our visions with one another in order to break down some of the barriers that misunderstanding and splinterism raise between us. Although I call myself an anarcho-feminist, this definition can easily include socialism, communism, cultural feminism, lesbian separatism, or any of a dozen other political labels. As Su Negrin writes: "No political umbrella can cover all my needs."<sup>2</sup> We may have more in common than we think we do. While I am writing here about my own reactions and perceptions, I don't see either my life or thoughts as separate from those of other women. In fact, one of my strongest convictions regarding the Women's Movement is that we do share an incredible commonality of vision. My own participation in this vision is not to



offer definitive statements or rigid answers but rather possibilities and changeable connections which I hope will bounce around among us and contribute to a continual process of individual and collective growth and evolution/revolution.

## What Does Anarchism Really Mean?

Anarchism has been maligned and misinterpreted for so long that maybe the most important thing to begin with is an explanation of what it is and isn't. Probably the most prevalent stereotype of the anarchist is a malevolent-looking man hiding a lighted bomb beneath a black cape, ready to destroy or assassinate everything and everybody in his path. This image engenders fear and revulsion in most people, regardless of their politics; consequently, anarchism is dismissed as ugly, violent, and extreme. Another misconception is the anarchist as impractical idealist, dealing in useless, Utopian abstractions and out of touch with concrete reality. The result: anarchism is once again dismissed, this time as an "impossible dream".

Neither of these images is accurate (though there have been both anarchist assassins and idealists – as is the case in many political movements, left and right). What is accurate depends, of course, on one's frame of reference. There are different kinds of anarchists, just as there are different kinds of socialists. What I will talk about here is communist-anarchism, which I see as virtually identical to libertarian (i.e. nonauthoritarian) socialism. Labels can be terribly confusing, so in hopes of clarifying the term, I'll define anarchism using three major principles (each of which I believe is related to a radical feminist analysis of society – more on that later):

(1) *Belief in the abolition of authority, hierarchy, government.* Anarchists call for the dissolution (rather than the seizure) of power – of human over human, of state over community. Whereas many socialists call for a working class government and an eventual "withering away of the state", anarchists believe that the means create the ends, that a strong State becomes self-perpetuating. The only way to achieve anarchism (according to anarchist theory) is through the creation of co-operative, anti-authoritarian forms. To separate the process from the goals of revolution is to insure the perpetuation of oppressive structure and style.

(2) *Belief in both individuality and collectivity.* Individuality is not incompatible with communist thought. A distinction must be made though, between "rugged individualism", which fosters competition and a disregard for the needs of others, and true individuality, which implies freedom without infringement on others' freedom. Specifically, in terms of social and political organization, this means balancing individual initiative with collective action through the creation of structures which enable decision-making to rest in the hands of all those in a group, community, or factory, not in the hands of "representatives" or "leaders". It means coordination and action via a non-hierarchical network (overlapping circles rather than a pyramid) of small groups or communities. (See descriptions of Spanish anarchist collectives in next section.) Finally, it means that successful revolution involves unmanipulated, autonomous individuals and groups working together to take "direct, unmediated control of society and of



their own lives".<sup>3</sup>

(3) *Belief in both spontaneity and organization.* Anarchists have long been accused of advocating chaos. Most people in fact believe that anarchism is a synonym for disorder, confusion, violence. This is a total misrepresentation of what anarchism stands for. Anarchists don't deny the necessity of organization; they only claim that it must come from below, not above, from within rather than from without. Externally imposed structure or rigid rules which foster manipulation and passivity are the most dangerous forms a so-called "revolution" can take. No one can dictate the exact shape of the future. Spontaneous action within the context of a specific situation is necessary if we are going to create a society which responds to the changing needs of individuals and groups. Anarchists believe in fluid forms: small-scale participatory democracy in conjunction with large-scale collective cooperation and coordination (without loss of individual initiative).

So anarchism sounds great, but how could it possibly work? That kind of Utopian romanticism couldn't have any relation to the real world... right? Wrong. Anarchists have actually been successful (if only temporarily) in a number of instances (none of which is very well known). Spain and France, in particular, have long histories of anarchist activity, and it was in these two countries that I found the most exciting concretizations of theoretical anarchism.

## *Beyond Theory – Spain 1936–39, France 1968*

*The revolution is a thing of the people, a popular creation; the counter-revolution is a thing of the State. It has always been so, and will always be so, whether in Russia, Spain, or China.*<sup>4</sup> – Anarchist Federation of Iberia (FAI), *Tierra y Libertad*, July 3, 1936

The so-called Spanish Civil War is popularly believed to have been a simple battle between Franco's fascist forces and those committed to liberal democracy. What has been overlooked, or ignored, is that much more was happening in Spain than civil war. A broadly-based social revolution adhering to anarchist principles was taking firm, concrete form in many areas of the country. The gradual curtailment and eventual destruction of this libertarian movement is less important to discuss here than what was actually achieved by the women and men who were part of it. Against tremendous odds, they made anarchism work.

The realization of anarchist collectivization and workers' self-management during the Spanish Revolution provides a classic example of organization-plus-spontaneity. In both rural and industrial Spain, anarchism had been a part of the popular consciousness for many years. In the countryside, the people had a long tradition of communalism; many villages still shared common property or gave plots of land to those without any. Decades of rural collectivism and cooperation laid the foundation for theoretical anarchism, which came to Spain in the 1870s (via the Italian revolutionary, Fanelli, a friend of Bakunin) and eventually gave rise to anarco-syndicalism, the application of anarchist principles to industrial trade unionism. The *Confederacion Nacional del Trabajo*, founded in 1910, was the anarco-syndicalist union (working closely with the militant *Federacion Anarquista*



Iberica) which provided instruction and preparation for workers' self-management and collectivization. Tens of thousands of books, newspapers, and pamphlets reaching almost every part of Spain contributed to an even greater general knowledge of anarchist thought.<sup>5</sup> The anarchist principles of non-hierarchical cooperation and individual initiative combined with anarco-sindicalist tactics of sabotage, boycott and general strike, and training in production and economics, gave the workers background in both theory and practice. This led to a successful spontaneous appropriation of both factories and land after July 1936.

When the Spanish right responded to the electoral victory of the Popular Front with an attempted military takeover, on July 19, 1936, the people fought back with a fury which checked the coup within 24 hours. At this point, ballot box success became incidental; total social revolution had begun. While the industrial workers either went on strike or actually began to run the factories themselves, the agricultural workers ignored landlords and started to cultivate the land on their own. Within a short time, over 60% of the land in Spain was worked collectively – without landlords, bosses, or competitive incentive. Industrial collectivization took place mainly in the province of Catalonia, where anarco-sindicalist influence was strongest. Since 75% of Spain's industry was located in Catalonia, this was no small achievement.<sup>6</sup> So, after 75 years of preparation and struggle, collectivization was achieved, through the spontaneous collective action of individuals dedicated to libertarian principles.

What, though, did collectivization actually mean, and how did it work? In general, the anarchist collectives functioned on two levels: (1) small-scale participatory democracy and (2) large-scale coordination with control at the bottom. At each level, the main concern was decentralization and individual initiative. In the factories and villages, representatives were chosen to councils which operated as administrative or coordinating bodies. Decisions always came from more general membership meetings, which all workers attended. To guard against the dangers of representation, representatives were workers themselves, and at all times subject to immediate, as well as periodic, replacement. These councils or committees were the basic units of self-management. From there, they could be expanded by further coordination into loose federations which would link together workers and operations over an entire industry or geographical area. In this way, distribution and sharing of goods could be performed, as well as implementation of programs of wide-spread concern, such as irrigation, transportation, and communication. Once again, the emphasis was on the bottom-to-top process. This very tricky balance between individuality and collectivism was most successfully accomplished by the Peasant Federation of Levant, which included 900 collectives, and the Aragon Federation of Collectives, composed of about 500 collectives.

Probably the most important aspect of self-management was the equalization of wages. This took many forms, but frequently the "family wage" system was used, wages being paid to each worker in money or coupons according to her/his needs and those of dependents. Goods in abundance were distributed freely, while others were obtainable with "money".

The benefits which came from wage equalization were tremendous. After huge



profits in the hands of a few men were eliminated, the excess money was used both to modernize industry (purchase of new equipment, better working conditions) and to improve the land (irrigation, dams, purchase of tractors, etc.). Not only were better products turned out more efficiently, but consumer prices were lowered as well. This was true in such varied industries as: textiles, metal armaments, gas, water, electricity, baking, fishing, municipal transportation, railroads, telephone services, optical products, health services, etc. The workers themselves benefitted from a shortened work week, better working conditions, free health care, unemployment pay, and a new pride in their work. Creativity was fostered by self-management and the spirit of mutual aid; workers were concerned with turning out products which were better than those turned out under conditions of labour exploitation. They wanted to demonstrate that socialism works, that competition and greed motives are unnecessary. Within months, the standard of living had been raised by anywhere from 50-100% in many areas of Spain.

The achievements of the Spanish anarchists go beyond a higher standard of living and economic equality; they involve the realization of basic human ideals: freedom, individual creativity, and collective cooperation. The Spanish anarchist collectives did not fail; they were destroyed from without. Those (of the right and left) who believed in a strong State worked to wipe them out – of Spain and history. The successful anarchism of roughly eight million Spanish people is only now beginning to be uncovered.

*C'est pour toi que tu fais la revolution.* \*<sup>7</sup> – Daniel and Gabriel Cohn-Bendit

Anarchism has played an important part in French history, but rather than delve into the past, I want to focus on a contemporary event – May-June, 1968. The May-June events have particular significance because they proved that a general strike and takeover of the factories by the workers, and the universities by the students, could happen in a modern, capitalistic, consumption-oriented country. In addition, the issues raised by the students and workers in France (e.g. self-determination, the quality of life) cut across class lines and have tremendous implications for the possibility of revolutionary change in a post-scarcity society.<sup>8</sup>

On March 22, 1968, students at the University of Nanterre, among them anarchist Daniel Cohn-Bendit, occupied administrative buildings at their school, calling for an end to both the Vietnam war and their own oppression as students. (Their demands were similar in content to those of students from Columbia to Berlin protesting *in loco parentis*.) The University was closed down, and the demonstrations spread to the Sorbonne. The SNESUP (the union of secondary school and university teachers) called for a strike, and the students' union, the UNEF, organized a demonstration for May 6. That day, students and police clashed in the Latin Quarter in Paris; the demonstrators built barricades in the streets, and many were brutally beaten by the riot police. By the 7th, the number of protesters had grown to between twenty and fifty thousand people, marching toward the Etoile singing the Internationale. During the next few days, skirmishes between demonstrators and police in the Latin Quarter became increasingly

\*It is for yourself that you make the revolution.











violent, and the public was generally outraged at the police repression. Talks between labour unions and teachers' and students' unions began, and the UNEF and the FEN (a teachers' union) called for an unlimited strike and demonstration. On May 13, around six hundred thousand people – students, teachers, and workers – marched through Paris in protest.

On the same day, the workers at the Sud-Aviation plant in Nantes (a city with the strongest anarco-syndicalist tendencies in France<sup>9</sup>) went out on strike. It was this action that touched off the general strike, the largest in history, including ten million workers – "professionals and labourers, intellectuals and football players."<sup>10</sup> Banks, post offices, gas stations, and department stores closed; the subway and busses stopped running; and trash piled up as the garbage collectors joined the strike. The Sorbonne was occupied by students, teachers, and anyone who wanted to come and participate in discussions there. Political dialogues which questioned the very basis of French capitalist society went on for days. All over Paris posters and graffiti appeared: *It is forbidden to forbid. Life without dead times. All power to the Imagination. The more you consume, the less you live.* May–June became both an "assault on the established order" and a "festival of the streets".<sup>11</sup> Old lines between the middle and working classes often became meaningless as the younger workers and the students found themselves making similar demands: liberation from an oppressive authoritarian system (university or factory) and the right to make decisions about their own lives.

The people of France stood at the brink of total revolution. A general strike had paralyzed the country. The students occupied the universities and the workers, the factories. What remained to be done was for the workers actually to work the factories, to take direct unmediated action and settle for nothing less than total self-management. Unfortunately, this did not occur. Authoritarian politics and bureaucratic methods die hard, and most of the major French workers' unions were saddled with both. As in Spain, the Communist Party worked against the direct, spontaneous actions of the people in the streets: the Revolution must be dictated from above. Leaders of the CGT (the Communist workers' union) tried to prevent contacts between the students and workers, and a united left soon became an impossibility. As de Gaulle and the police mobilized their forces and even greater violence broke out, many strikers accepted limited demands (better pay, shorter hours, etc.) and returned to work. Students continued their increasingly bloody confrontations with police, but the moment had passed. By the end of June, France had returned to "normality" under the same old Gaullist regime.

What happened in France in 1968 is vitally connected to the Spanish Revolution of 1936; in both cases anarchist principles were not only discussed but implemented. The fact that the French workers never did achieve working self-management may be because anarco-syndicalism was not as prevalent in France in the years prior to 1968 as it was in Spain before 1936. Of course, this is an oversimplification; explanation for a "failed" revolution can run on into infinity. What is crucial here, once again, is the fact that it happened at all. May–June, 1968, disproves the common belief that revolution is impossible in an advanced capitalist country. The children of the French middle and working classes, bred to passivity, mindless consumerism, and/or alienated labor, were rejecting much more





Many women fought in the CNT-FAT militias.



than capitalism. They were questioning authority itself, demanding the right to a free and *meaningful* existence. The reasons for revolution in modern industrial society are thus no longer limited to hunger and material scarcity; they include the desire for human liberation from all forms of domination, in essence a radical change in the very "quality of everyday life".<sup>12</sup> They assume the necessity of a libertarian society. Anarchism can no longer be considered an anachronism.

*It is often said that anarchists live in a world of dreams to come and do not see things which happen today. We see them only too well, and in their true colors, and that is what makes us carry the hatchet into the forest of prejudices that besets us.*<sup>13</sup> — Peter Kropotkin

There are two main reasons why revolution was aborted in France: (1) inadequate preparation in the theory and practice of anarchism and (2) the vast power of the State coupled with authoritarianism and bureaucracy in potentially sympathetic left-wing groups. In Spain, the revolution was more widespread and tenacious because of the extensive preparation. Yet it was still eventually crushed by a fascist State and authoritarian leftists. It is important to consider these two factors in relation to the situation in the United States today. We are not only facing a powerful State whose armed forces, police, and nuclear weapons could instantly destroy the entire human race, but we also find ourselves confronting a pervasive reverence for authority and hierarchical forms whose continuance is ensured daily through the kind of home-grown passivity bred by family, school, church, and TV screen. In addition, the U.S. is a huge country, with only a small, sporadic history of anarchist activity. It would seem that not only are we unprepared, we are literally dwarfed by a State more powerful than those of France and Spain combined. To say we are up against tremendous odds is an understatement.

But where does defining the Enemy as a ruthless, unconquerable giant lead us? If we don't allow ourselves to be paralyzed by fatalism and futility, it could force us to redefine revolution in a way that would focus on anarcho-feminism as the framework in which to view the struggle for human liberation. It is women who now hold the key to new conceptions of revolution, women who realize that revolution can no longer mean the seizure of power or the domination of one group by another — under any circumstances, for any length of time. It is domination itself that must be abolished. The very survival of the planet depends on it. Men can no longer be allowed to wantonly manipulate the environment for their own self-interest, just as they can no longer be allowed to systematically destroy whole races of human beings. The presence of hierarchy and authoritarian mind-set threaten our human and planetary existence. Global liberation and libertarian politics have become *necessary*, not just utopian pipe dreams. We must "acquire the conditions of life in order to survive".<sup>14</sup>

To focus on anarcho-feminism as the necessary revolutionary framework for our struggle is not to deny the immensity of the task before us. We do see "only too well" the root causes of our oppression and the tremendous power of the Enemy. But we also see that the way out of the deadly historical cycle of incomplete or aborted revolutions requires of us new definitions and new tactics — ones which point to the kind of "hollowing out"<sup>15</sup> process described later in the "Making



Utopia Real" section. As women, we are particularly well-suited for participation in this process. Underground for ages, we have learned to be covert, subtle, sly, silent, tenacious, acutely sensitive, and expert at communication skills.

For our own survival, we learned to weave webs of rebellion which were invisible to the "masterful" eye.

We know what a boot looks like  
when seen from underneath,  
we know the philosophy of boots...

Soon we will invade like weeds,  
everywhere but slowly;  
the captive plants will rebel  
with us, fences will topple,  
brick walls ripple and fall,  
there will be no more boots.  
Meanwhile we eat dirt  
and sleep; we are waiting  
under your feet.

When we say Attack  
you will hear nothing  
at first. <sup>16</sup>

Anarchistic preparation is not non-existent in this country. It exists in the minds and actions of women readying themselves (often unknowingly) for a revolution whose forms will shatter historical inevitability and the very process of history itself.

## Anarchism and the Women's Movement

*The development of sisterhood is a unique threat, for it is directed against the basic social and psychic model of hierarchy and domination...* <sup>17</sup> – Mary Daly

*All across the country, independent groups of women began functioning without the structure, leaders, and other factotums of the male left, creating independently and simultaneously, organizations similar to those of anarchists of many decades and locales. No accident, either.* <sup>18</sup> – Cathy Levine

I have not touched upon the matter of woman's role in Spain and France, as it can be summed up in one word – unchanged. Anarchist men have been little better than males everywhere in their subjection of women. <sup>19</sup> Thus the absolute necessity of a feminist anarchist revolution. Otherwise the very principles on which anarchism is based become utter hypocrisy.

The current women's movement and a radical feminist analysis of society have contributed much to libertarian thought. In fact, it is my contention that feminists have been unconscious anarchists in both theory and practice for years. We now need to become consciously aware of the connections between anarchism and feminism and use that framework for our thoughts and actions. We have to be able to see very clearly where we want to go and how to get there. In order to be



more effective, in order to create the future we sense is possible, we must realize that what we want is not change but total *transformation*.

The radical feminist perspective is almost pure anarchism. The basic theory postulates the nuclear family as the basis for all authoritarian systems. The lesson the child learns, from father to teacher to boss to God, is to OBEY the great anonymous voice of Authority. To graduate from childhood to adulthood is to become a full-fledged automaton, incapable of questioning or even thinking clearly. We pass into middle-America, believing everything we are told and numbly accepting the destruction of life all around us.

What feminists are dealing with is a mind-fucking process – the male domineering attitude toward the external world, allowing only subject/object relationships. Traditional male politics reduces humans to object status and then dominates and manipulates them for abstract “goals”. Women, on the other hand, are trying to develop a consciousness of “Other” in all areas. We see subject-to-subject relationships as not only desirable but necessary. (Many of us have chosen to work with and love only women for just this reason – those kinds of relationships are so much more possible.) Together we are working to expand our empathy and understanding of other living things and to identify with those entities outside of ourselves, rather than objectifying and manipulating them. At this point, a respect for all life is a prerequisite for our very survival.

Radical feminist theory also criticizes male hierarchical thought patterns – in which rationality dominates sensuality, mind dominates intuition, and persistent splits and polarities (active/passive, child/adult, sane/insane, work/play, spontaneity/organization) alienate us from the mind-body experience as a *Whole* and from the *Continuum* of human experience. Women are attempting to get rid of these splits, to live in harmony with the universe as whole, integrated humans dedicated to the collective healing of our individual wounds and schisms.

In actual practice within the Women's Movement, feminists have had both success and failure in abolishing hierarchy and domination. I believe that women frequently speak and act as “intuitive” anarchists, that is, we *approach*, or *verge on*, a complete denial of all patriarchal thought and organization. That approach, however, is blocked by the powerful and insidious forms which patriarchy takes – in our minds and in our relationships with one another. Living within and being conditioned by an authoritarian society often prevents us from making that all-important connection between feminism and anarchism. When we say we are fighting the patriarchy, it isn't always clear to all of us that that means fighting *all* hierarchy, *all* leadership, *all* government, and the very idea of authority itself. Our impulses toward collective work and small leaderless groups have been anarchistic, but in most cases we haven't *called* them by that name. And that is important, because an understanding of feminism as anarchism could springboard women out of reformism and stop-gap measures into a revolutionary confrontation with the basic nature of authoritarian politics.

If we want to “bring down the patriarchy”, we need to talk about anarchism, to know exactly what it means, and to use that framework to transform ourselves and the structure of our daily lives. Feminism doesn't mean female corporate power or a woman President; it means *no* corporate power and *no* Presidents. The



Equal Rights Amendment will not transform society; it only gives women the "right" to plug into a hierarchical economy. Challenging sexism means challenging all hierarchy – economic, political, and personal. And that means an anarcho-feminist revolution.

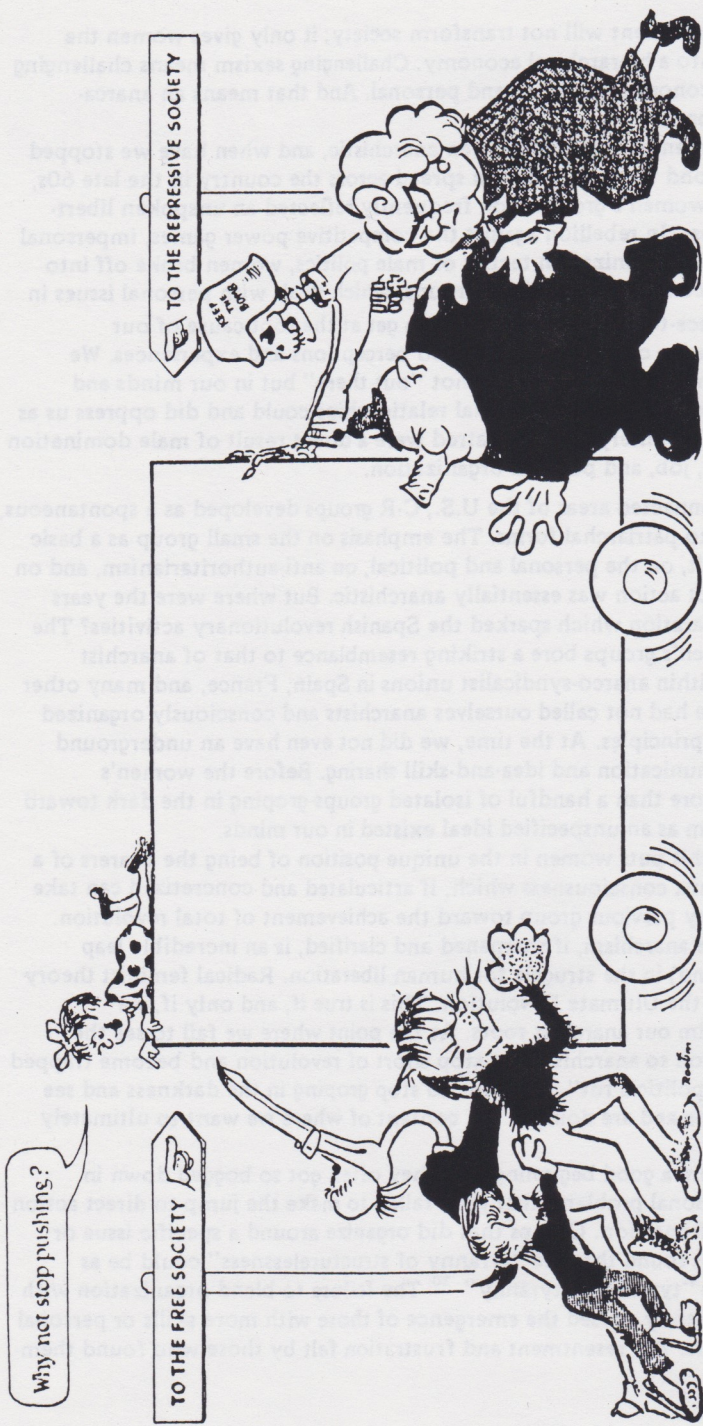
Specifically, when have feminists been anarchistic, and when have we stopped short? As the second wave of feminism spread across the country in the late 60s, the forms which women's groups took frequently reflected an unspoken libertarian consciousness. In rebellion against the competitive power games, impersonal hierarchy, and mass organization tactics of male politics, women broke off into small, leaderless, consciousness-raising groups, which dealt with personal issues in our daily lives. Face-to-face, we attempted to get at the root cause of our oppression by sharing our hitherto unvalued perceptions and experiences. We learned from each other that politics is not "out there" but in our minds and bodies and between individuals. Personal relationships could and did oppress us as a political class. Our misery and self-hatred were a direct result of male domination – in home, street, job, and political organization.

So, in many unconnected areas of the U.S., C-R groups developed as a spontaneous, direct (re)action to patriarchal forms. The emphasis on the small group as a basic organizational unit, on the personal and political, on anti-authoritarianism, and on spontaneous direct action was essentially anarchistic. But where were the years and years of preparation which sparked the Spanish revolutionary activities? The structure of women's groups bore a striking resemblance to that of anarchist affinity groups within anarcho-syndicalist unions in Spain, France, and many other countries. Yet, we had not called ourselves anarchists and consciously organized around anarchist principles. At the time, we did not even have an underground network of communication and idea-and-skill sharing. Before the women's movement was more than a handful of isolated groups groping in the dark toward answers, anarchism as an unspecified ideal existed in our minds.

I believe that this puts women in the unique position of being the bearers of a subsurface anarchist consciousness which, if articulated and concretized can take us further than any previous group toward the achievement of total revolution. Women's intuitive anarchism, if sharpened and clarified, is an incredible leap forward (or beyond) in the struggle for human liberation. Radical feminist theory hails feminism as the Ultimate Revolution. This is true if, and only if, we recognize and claim our anarchist roots. At the point where we fail to see the feminist connection to anarchism, we stop short of revolution and become trapped in "ye olde male political rut". It is time to stop groping in the darkness and see what we have done and are doing in the context of where we want to ultimately be.

C-R groups were a good beginning, but they often got so bogged down in talking about personal problems that they failed to make the jump to direct action and political confrontation. Groups that did organize around a specific issue or project sometimes found that the "tyranny of structurelessness" could be as destructive as the "tyranny of tyranny" <sup>20</sup> The failure to blend organization with spontaneity frequently caused the emergence of those with more skills or personal charisma as leaders. The resentment and frustration felt by those who found them-







selves following sparked in-fighting, built-tripping, and power struggles. Too often this ended in either total ineffectiveness or a backlash adherence to "what we need is more structure" (in the old male up/down sense of the word).

Once again, I think that what was missing was a verbalized anarchist analysis. Organization does not have to stifle spontaneity or follow hierarchical patterns. The women's groups or projects which have been the most successful are those which experimented with various fluid structures: the rotation of tasks and chairpersons, sharing of all skills, equal access to information and resources, non-monopolized decision-making, and time slots for discussion of group dynamics. This latter structural element is important because it involves a continued effort on the part of group members to watch for "creeping power politics". If women are verbally committing themselves to collective work, this requires a real struggle to unlearn passivity (to eliminate "followers") and to share special skills or knowledge (to avoid "leaders"). This doesn't mean that we cannot be inspired by one another's words and lives; strong actions by strong individuals can be contagious and thus important. But we must be careful not to slip into old behavior patterns.

On the positive side, the emerging structure of the women's movement in the last few years has generally followed an anarchistic pattern of small project-oriented groups continually weaving an underground network of communication and collective action around specific issues. Partial success at leader/"star" avoidance and the diffusion of small action projects (Rape Crisis Centers, Women's Health Collectives) across the country have made it extremely difficult for the women's movement to be pinned down to one person or group. Feminism is a many-headed monster which cannot be destroyed by singular decapitation. We spread and grow in ways that are incomprehensible to a hierarchical mentality.

This is not, however, to underestimate the immense power of the Enemy. The most treacherous form this power can take is cooptation, which feeds on any short-sighted unanarchistic view of feminism as mere "social change". To think of sexism as an evil which can be eradicated by female participation in the way things are is to insure the continuation of domination and oppression. "Feminist" capitalism is a contradiction in terms. When we establish women's credit unions, restaurants, bookstores, etc., we must be clear that we are doing so for our own survival, for the purpose of creating a counter-system whose processes contradict and challenge competition, profit-making, and all forms of economic oppression. We must be committed to "living on the boundaries"<sup>21</sup>, to anti-capitalist, non-consumption values. What we want is neither integration nor a coup d'état which would "transfer power from one set of boys to another set of boys".<sup>22</sup> What we ask is nothing less than total revolution, revolution whose forms invent a future untainted by inequity, domination, or disrespect for individual variation — in short, feminist-anarchist revolution. I believe that women have known all along how to move in the direction of human liberation; we only need to shake off lingering male political forms and dictums and focus on our own anarchistic female analysis.

## *Where Do We Go From Here? Making Utopia Real*

*"Ah, your vision is romantic bullshit, soppy religiosity, flimsy idealism." "You're*



into poetry because you can't deliver concrete details." So says the little voice in the back of my (your?) head. But the front of my head knows that if you were here next to me, we could talk. And that in our talk would come (concrete, detailed) descriptions of how such and such might happen, how this or that would be resolved. What my vision really lacks in concrete, detailed human bodies. Then it wouldn't be a flimsy vision, it would be a fleshy reality.<sup>23</sup> – Su Negrin

Instead of getting discouraged and isolated now, we should be in our small groups – discussing, planning, creating, and making trouble... we should always be actively engaging in and creating feminist activity, because we all thrive on it; in the absence of [it], women take tranquilizers, go insane, and commit suicide.<sup>24</sup> – Cathy Levin

Those of us who lived through the excitement of sit-ins, marches, student strikes, demonstrations, and REVOLUTION NOW in the 60s may find ourselves disillusioned and downright cynical about anything happening in the 70s. Giving up or in ("open" marriage? hip capitalism? the Guru Maharaji?) seems easier than facing the prospect of decades of struggle and maybe even ultimate failure. At this point, we lack an overall framework to see the process of revolution in. Without it, we are doomed to deadended, isolated struggle or the individual solution. The kind of framework, or coming-together-point, that anarca-feminism provides would appear to be a prerequisite for any sustained effort to reach Utopian goals. By looking at Spain and France, we can see that true revolution is "neither an accidental happening nor a coup d'etat artificially engineered from above".<sup>25</sup> It takes years of preparation: sharing of ideas and information, changes in consciousness and behavior, and the creation of political and economic alternatives to capitalist, hierarchical structures. It takes spontaneous direct action on the part of autonomous individuals through collective political confrontation. It is important to "free your mind" and your personal life, but it is not sufficient. Liberation is not an insular experience; it occurs in conjunction with other human beings. There are no individual "liberated women".

So, what I'm talking about is a long-term process, a series of actions in which we unlearn passivity and learn to take control over our own lives. I am talking about a "hollowing out" of the present system through the formation of mental and physical (concrete) alternatives to the way things are. The romantic image of a small band of armed guerillas overthrowing the U.S. government is obsolete (as is all male politics) and basically irrelevant to this conception of revolution. We would be squashed if we tried it. Besides, as the poster says, "What we want is not the overthrow of the government, but a situation in which it gets lost in the shuffle." This is what happened (temporarily) in Spain, and almost happened in France. Whether armed resistance will be necessary at some point is open to debate. The anarchist principle of "means create ends" seems to imply pacifism, but the power of the State is so great that it is difficult to be absolute about non-violence. (Armed resistance was crucial in the Spanish Revolution, and seemed important in France 1968 as well.) The question of pacifism, however, would entail another discussion, and what I'm concerned with here is emphasizing the preparation needed to transform society, a preparation which includes an anarca-



feminist framework, long-range revolutionary patience, and continual active confrontation with entrenched patriarchal attitudes.

The actual tactics of preparation are things that we have been involved with for a long time. We need to continue and develop them further. I see them as functioning on three levels: (1) "educational" (sharing of ideas, experiences), (2) economic/political, and (3) personal/political.

"Education" has a rather condescending ring to it, but I don't mean "bringing the word to the masses" or guilt-tripping individuals into prescribed ways of being. I'm talking about the many methods we have developed for sharing our lives with one another – from writing (our network of feminist publications), study groups, and women's radio and TV shows to demonstrations, marches, and street theatre. The mass media would seem to be a particularly important area for revolutionary communication and influence – just think of how our own lives were *mis*-shaped by radio and TV.<sup>26</sup> Seen in isolation, these things might seem ineffectual, but people *do* change from writing, reading, talking, and listening to each other, as well as from active participation in political movements. Going out into the streets together shatters passivity and creates a spirit of communal effort and life energy which can help sustain and transform us. My own transformation from all-american-girl to anarcho-feminist was brought about by a decade of reading, discussion, and involvement with many kinds of people and politics – from the Midwest to the West and East Coasts. My experiences may in some ways be unique, but they are not, I think, extraordinary. In many, many places in this country, people are slowly beginning to question the way they were conditioned to acceptance and passivity. God and Government are not the ultimate authorities they once were. This is not to minimize the extent of the power of Church and State, but rather to emphasize that seemingly inconsequential changes in thought and behavior, when solidified in collective action, constitute a real challenge to the patriarchy.

Economic/political tactics fall into the realm of direct action and "purposeful illegality" (Daniel Guerin's term). Anarcho-syndicalism specifies three major modes of direct action: sabotage, strike, and boycott. Sabotage means "obstructing by every possible method, the regular process of production".<sup>27</sup> More and more frequently, sabotage is practised by people unconsciously influenced by changing societal values. For example, systematic absenteeism is carried out by both blue and white collar workers. Defying employers can be done as subtly as the "slow-down" or as blatantly as the "fuck-up". Doing as little work as possible as slowly as possible is common employee practice, as is messing up the actual work process (often as a union tactic during a strike). Witness habitual misfiling or loss of "important papers" by secretaries, or the continual switching of destination placards on trains during the 1967 railroad strike in Italy.

Sabotage tactics can be used to make strikes much more effective. The strike itself is the workers' most important weapon. Any individual strike has the potential of paralyzing the system if it spreads to other industries and becomes a general strike. Total social revolution is then only a step away. Of course, the general strike must have as its ultimate goal worker's self-management (as well as a clear sense of how to achieve and hold on to it), or else the revolution will be still-born (as in France, 1968).



The boycott can also be a powerful strike or union strategy (e.g., the boycott of non-union grapes, lettuce, and wines, and of Farah pants). In addition, it can be used to force economic and social changes. Refusal to vote, to pay war taxes, or to participate in capitalist competition and over-consumption are all important actions when coupled with support of alternative, non-profit structures (food co-ops, health and law collectives, recycled clothing and book stores, free schools, etc.). Consumerism is one of the main strongholds of capitalism. To boycott buying itself (especially products geared to obsolescence and those offensively advertised) is a tactic that has the power to change the "quality of everyday life". Refusal to vote is often practised out of despair or passivity rather than as a conscious political statement against a pseudo-democracy where power and money elect a political elite. Non-voting can mean something other than silent consent if we are simultaneously participating in the creation of genuine democratic forms in an alternative network of anarchist affinity groups.

This takes us to the third area – personal/political, which is of course vitally connected to the other two. The anarchist affinity group has long been a revolutionary organizational structure. In anarco-syndicalist unions, they functioned as training grounds for workers' self-management. They can be temporary groupings of individuals for a specific short-term goal, more "permanent" work collectives (as an alternative to professionalism and career elitism), or living collectives where individuals learn how to rid themselves of domination or possessiveness in their one-to-one relationships. Potentially, anarchist affinity groups are the base on which we can build a new libertarian, non-hierarchical society. The way we live and work changes the way we think and perceive (and vice versa), and when changes in consciousness become changes in action and behavior, the revolution has begun.

Making Utopia real involves many levels of struggle. In addition to specific tactics which can be constantly developed and changed, we need political tenacity: the strength and ability to see beyond the present to a joyous, revolutionary future. To get from here to there requires more than a leap of faith. It demands of each of us a day-to-day, long-range commitment to possibility and direct action.

## *The Transformation of the Future*

*The creation of female culture is as pervasive a process as we can imagine, for it is participation in a VISION which is continually unfolding anew in everything from our talks with friends, to meat boycotts, to taking over storefronts for child care centres, to making love with a sister. It is revelatory, undefinable, except as a process of change. Women's culture is all of us exorcising, naming, creating toward the vision of harmony with ourselves, each other, and our sister earth. In the last ten years our having come faster and closer than ever before in the history of the patriarchy to overturning its power... is cause of exhilarant hope – wild, contagious, unconquerable, crazy HOPE!... The hope, the winning of life over death, despair and meaninglessness is everywhere I look now – like talismen of the faith in WOMANVISION...<sup>28</sup> – Laurel*

*I used to think that if the revolution didn't happen Tomorrow, we would all be*



doomed to a catastrophic (or at least, catatonic) fate. I don't believe anymore that kind of before-and-after revolution, and I think we set ourselves up for failure and despair by thinking of it in those terms. I *do* believe that what we all need, what we absolutely require, in order to continue struggling (in spite of oppression of our daily lives) is HOPE, that is, a vision of the future so beautiful and so powerful that it pulls us steadily forward in a bottom-up creation of an inner and outer world both habitable and self-fulfilling for all.\* I believe that hope exists – that it is in Laurel's "womanvision", in Mary Daly's "existential courage"<sup>29</sup> and in anarcho-feminism. Our different voices describe the same dream, and "only the dream can shatter stone that blocks our mouths".<sup>30</sup> As we speak, we change, and as we change, we transform ourselves and the future simultaneously.

It is true that there is no solution, individual or otherwise, in our society.<sup>31</sup> But if we can only balance this rather depressing knowledge with an awareness of the radical metamorphoses we have experienced – in our consciousness and in our lives – the perhaps we can have the courage to continue to create what we DREAM is possible. Obviously, it is not easy to face daily oppression and still continue to hope. But *it is our only chance*. If we abandon hope (the ability to see connections, to dream the present into the future), then we have already lost. Hope is woman's most powerful revolutionary tool; it is what we give each other every time we share our lives, our work, and our love. It pulls us forward out of self-hatred, self-blame, and the fatalism which keeps us prisoners in separate cells. If we surrender to depression and despair now, we are accepting the inevitability of authoritarian politics and patriarchal domination ("Despair is the worst betrayal, the coldest seduction: to believe at last that the enemy will prevail."<sup>32</sup> Marge Piercy). We must not let our pain and anger fade into hopelessness or short-sighted semi-"solutions". Nothing we can do is enough, but on the other hand, those "small changes" we make in our minds, in our lives, in one another's lives, are not totally futile and ineffectual. It takes a long time to make a revolution: it is something that one both prepares for and lives now. The transformation of the future will not be instantaneous, but it can be *total*... a continuum of thought and action, individuality and collectivity, spontaneity and organization, stretching from what is to what can be.

Anarchism provides a framework for this transformation. It is a vision, a dream, a possibility which becomes "real" as we live it. Feminism is the connection that links anarchism to the future. When we finally see that connection clearly, when we hold to that vision, when we refuse to be raped of that HOPE, we will be stepping over the edge of nothingness into a being now just barely imaginable. The womanvision that is anarcho-feminism has been carried inside our women's bodies for centuries. "It will be an ongoing struggle in each of us, to birth this vision"<sup>33</sup> but we must do it. We must "ride our anger like elephants into battle".

*We are sleepwalkers troubled by nightmare flashes,  
In locked wards we closet our vision, renouncing...  
Only when we break the mirror and climb into our vision,*

\*And, by self-fulfilling I mean not only in terms of survival needs (sufficient food, clothing, shelter, etc.) but psychological needs as well (e.g., a non-oppressive environment which fosters



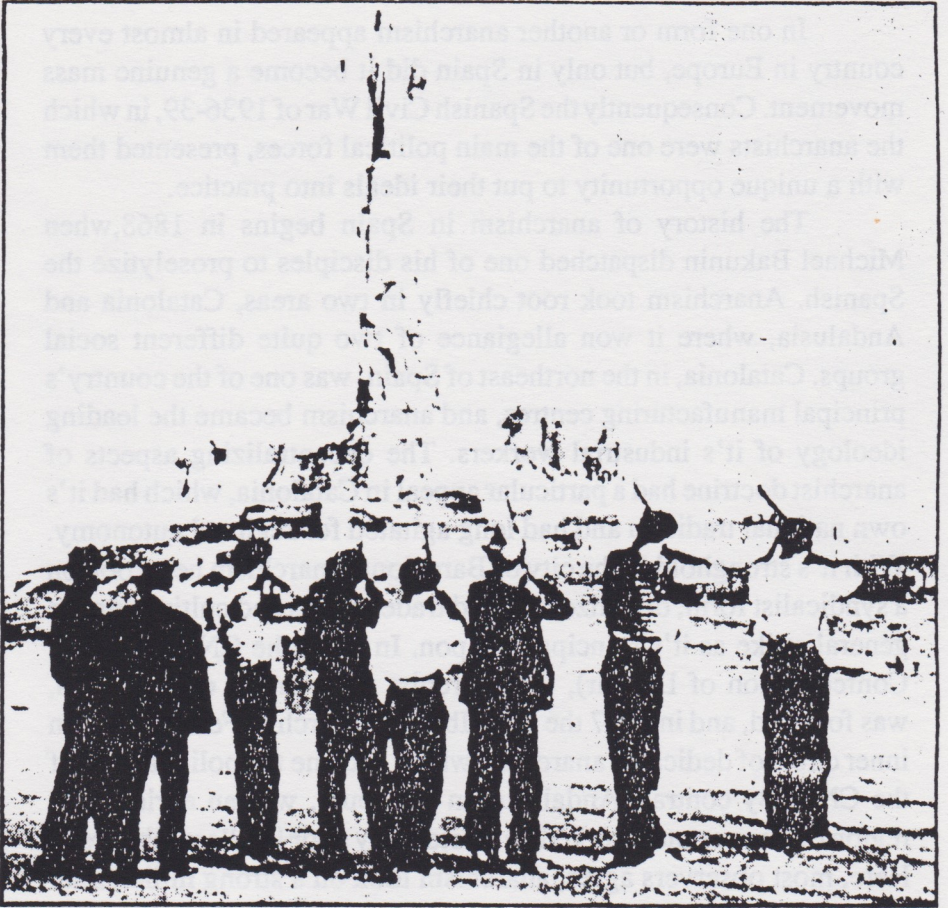
Only when we are the wind together streaming and singing,  
 Only in the dream we become with our bones for spears,  
     we are real at last  
     and wake.<sup>34</sup>

## FOOTNOTES

1. Emma Goldman, "Anarchism: What It Really Stands For", *Red Emma Speaks* (Vintage Books, 1972), p.59.
2. Su Negrin, *Begin at Start* (Times Change Press, 1972), p.128.
3. Murray Bookchin, *On Spontaneity and Organization*, Liberation, March, 1972, p.6.
4. Paul Berman, *Quotations from the Anarchists* (Praeger Publishers, 1972), p. 68.
5. Sam Dolgoff, *The Anarchist Collectives* (Free Life Editions, 1974), p. 27.
6. *Ibid*, pp.6, 7, 85.
7. Daniel and Gabriel Cohn-Bendit, *Obsolete Communism - The Left Wing Alternative* (McGraw-Hill, 1968), p.256.
8. See Murray Bookchin's *Post Scarcity Anarchism* (Ramparts Press, 1974) for both an insightful analysis of the May-June events and a discussion of revolutionary potential in a technological society.
9. *Ibid*, p.262.
10. *Ibid*, p.250.
11. Bookchin, *On Spontaneity and Organization*, pp.11-12.
12. Bookchin, *Post Scarcity Anarchism*, p.249.
13. Berman, p.146.
14. Bookchin, *Post Scarcity Anarchism*, p.40.
15. Bookchin, *On Spontaneity and Organization*, p.10.
16. Margaret Atwood, "Song of the Worms", *You Are Happy* (Harper & Row, 1974), p.35.
17. Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father* (Beacon Press, 1973), p.133.
18. Cathy Levine, "The Tyranny of Tyranny", *Black Rose* 1, p.56.
19. Temma Kaplan of the UCLA history department has done considerable research on women's anarchist groups (esp. "Mujeres Liberes") in the Spanish Revolution.
- See also Liz Willis, *Women in the Spanish Revolution*, Solidarity Pamphlet No. 48.
20. See Joreen's "The Tyranny of Structurelessness", *Second Wave*, Vol. 2, No. 1, and Cathy Levine's "The Tyranny of Tyranny", *Black Rose* 1.
21. Daly, p.55.
22. Robin Morgan, speech at Boston College, Boston, Mass., Nov., 1973.
23. Negrin, p.171.
24. Levine, p.50.
25. Dolgoff, p.19.
26. The Cohn-Bendits state that one major mistake in Paris 1968 was the failure to take complete control of the media, especially the radio and TV.
27. Goldman, "Syndicalism: Its Theory and Practice", *Red Emma Speaks*, p.71.
28. Laurel, "Towards a Woman Vision", *Amazon Quarterly*, Vol. 1, Issue 2, p.40.
29. Daly, p.23.
30. Marge Piercy, "Provocation of the Dream".
31. Fran Taylor, "A Depressing Discourse on Romance, the Individual Solution, and Related Misfortunes", *Second Wave*, Vol. 3, No. 4.
32. Marge Piercy, "Laying Down the Tower", *To Be of Use* (Doubleday, 1973), p.88.
33. Laurel, p.40.
34. Piercy, "Provocation of the Dream".

total freedom of choice before specific, concretely possible alternatives).





### **"THE SPANISH COCKPIT"**

*Finally, the excerpt of "The Spanish Cockpit" was taken from "The Essential Works of Anarchism", published by Bantam Books (!). Available at fine bookselling establishments near you.*



In one form or another anarchism appeared in almost every country in Europe, but only in Spain did it become a genuine mass movement. Consequently the Spanish Civil War of 1936-39, in which the anarchists were one of the main political forces, presented them with a unique opportunity to put their ideals into practice.

The history of anarchism in Spain begins in 1868, when Michael Bakunin dispatched one of his disciples to proselytize the Spanish. Anarchism took root chiefly in two areas, Catalonia and Andalusia, where it won allegiance of two quite different social groups. Catalonia, in the northeast of Spain, was one of the country's principal manufacturing centres, and anarchism became the leading ideology of its industrial workers. The decentralizing aspects of anarchist doctrine had a particular appeal in Catalonia, which had its own national tradition and had long agitated for regional autonomy. With its stronghold in the city of Barcelona, anarchism here took on a syndicalist form, organized around trade unions and cultivating the general strike as its principal weapon. In 1910 the CNT (National Confederation of Labour), the anarchist trade-union organization, was founded, and in 1927 the FAI (Iberian Anarchist Federation), an inner circle of dedicated anarchists which became the political arm of the CNT. By contrast Andalusia, in the south, was an agricultural region of huge estates worked by wretchedly poor landless labourers. Here, most observers agree, anarchism took on a strong millenarian tinge, the peasants adopting it with an almost religious enthusiasm and finding in it the promise of the imminent dawn of a new age of freedom. In addition, anarchism appealed to the age-old communal traditions which were still strong here and in other parts of Spain.

In the summer of 1936, at the start of the Civil War, most of the large industrial enterprises in the Barcelona area were taken over by the workers under the leadership of the CNT-FAI. At the same time a number of agricultural communes were formed under anarchist auspices in the villages of Andalusia and elsewhere in eastern and southern Spain. Because of the conditions of warfare, confusion, and party rivalry that prevailed at the time, information on these experiments in anarchist organization is sparse and unreliable. All the more valuable, then, is the eyewitness testimony of a shrewd and objective observer. Franz Borkenau was not himself an anarchist but a disillusioned Marxist. He was the son of an Austrian judge and had held a



post in the Comintern in the early twenties. Later he took a doctoral degree in sociology, and although he had abandoned communism he remained a perceptive student of the subject. "The Spanish Cockpit" is an account of his two trips to Spain during the Civil War, the first shortly after it's outbreak and the second at the beginning of 1937, when the position of the anarchists had begun to deteriorate. In the passage here he describes the workings of Spanish anarchism at it's height, in the early days of the war. His accounts not only provides details of the institutional arrangements of anarchist enterprises and communities but convey the intense moral fervour that was one of their essential characteristics.

Somewhat like Makhno, the Spanish anarchists found themselves fighting two implacable enemies: the right-wing forces, who were opposed to social revolution, and the Communists, who were opposed to social revolution in anarchist form. Under these pressures the anarchists were forced increasingly - and fatally - to compromise their ideals and accept centralized military and political organization. Whether their principles would have proved more workable under peaceful conditions is a question that may well be asked but cannot be answered conclusively on the basis of this experience. In any case, the Spanish Civil War remains the most extensive and sustained attempt in the history of anarchism to usher in the new libertarian age.

## 11 P.M., BARCELONA

Again a peaceful arrival. No taxi-cabs, but instead old horse-cabs, to carry us into the town. Few people in the Paseo de Colon. And, then, as we turned round the corner of the Ramblas (the chief artery of Barcelona) came a tremendous surprise: before our eyes, in a flash, unfolded itself the revolution. It was overwhelming. It was as if we had been landed on a continent different from anything I had seen before.

The first impression: armed workers, rifles on their shoulders, but wearing their civilian clothes. Perhaps 30% of the males on the Ramblas were carrying rifles, though there were no police, and no regular military in uniforms. Arms, arms, and again arms. Very few of these armed proletarians wore the new dark-blue pretty militia uniforms. They sat on the benches or walked the pavement of the Ramblas, their rifles over the right shoulder, and often their girls on



the left arm. They started off, in groups, to patrol out-lying districts. They stood, as guards, before the entrances of hotels, administrative buildings, and the larger stores. They crouched behind the few still standing barricades, which were completely constructed out of stones and sand-bags (most of the barricades had already been removed, and the destroyed pavement speedily restored). They drove at top speed innumerable fashionable cars, which they had expropriated and covered, in white paint, with the initials of their respective organizations: CNT-FAI, UGT, PSUC (United Socialist Communist Party of Catalonia), POUM (Trotskyists), or with all these initials at once, in order to display their loyalty to the movement in general. Some of the cars simply wore the letters UHP (Unite, proletarian brothers!), the slogan glorified by the Asturias rising of 1934. The fact that all these armed men walked about, marched, and drove in their ordinary clothes made the thing only more impressive as a display of the power of the factory workers. The anarchists, recognizable by badges and insignia in red and black, were obviously in overwhelming numbers. And no 'bourgeoisie' whatever! No more well-dressed young women and fashionable senioritos on the Ramblas! Only working men and working women; no hats even! The Generalitat, by wireless, had advised people not to wear them, because it might look 'bourgeoisie' and give a bad impression. The Ramblas are not less colourful then before, because there is an infinite variety of blue, red, black, of the party badges, the neckties, the fancy uniforms of the militia. But what a contrast with the pretty shining colours of the Catalan upper-class girls of former days!

The amount of expropriation in the few days since 19 July is almost incredible. the largest hotels, with one or two exceptions, have all been requisitioned by working-class organizations (not burnt, as had been reported in many newspapers). So were most of the larger stores. Many of the banks are closed, the others bear inscriptions declaring them under the control of the Generalitat. Practically all the factory-owners, we were told, had either fled or been killed, and their factories taken over by the workers. Everywhere large posters at the front of impressive buildings proclaim the fact of expropriation, explaining either that the management is now in the hands of the CNT, or that a particular organization has appropriated this building for it's organizing work.



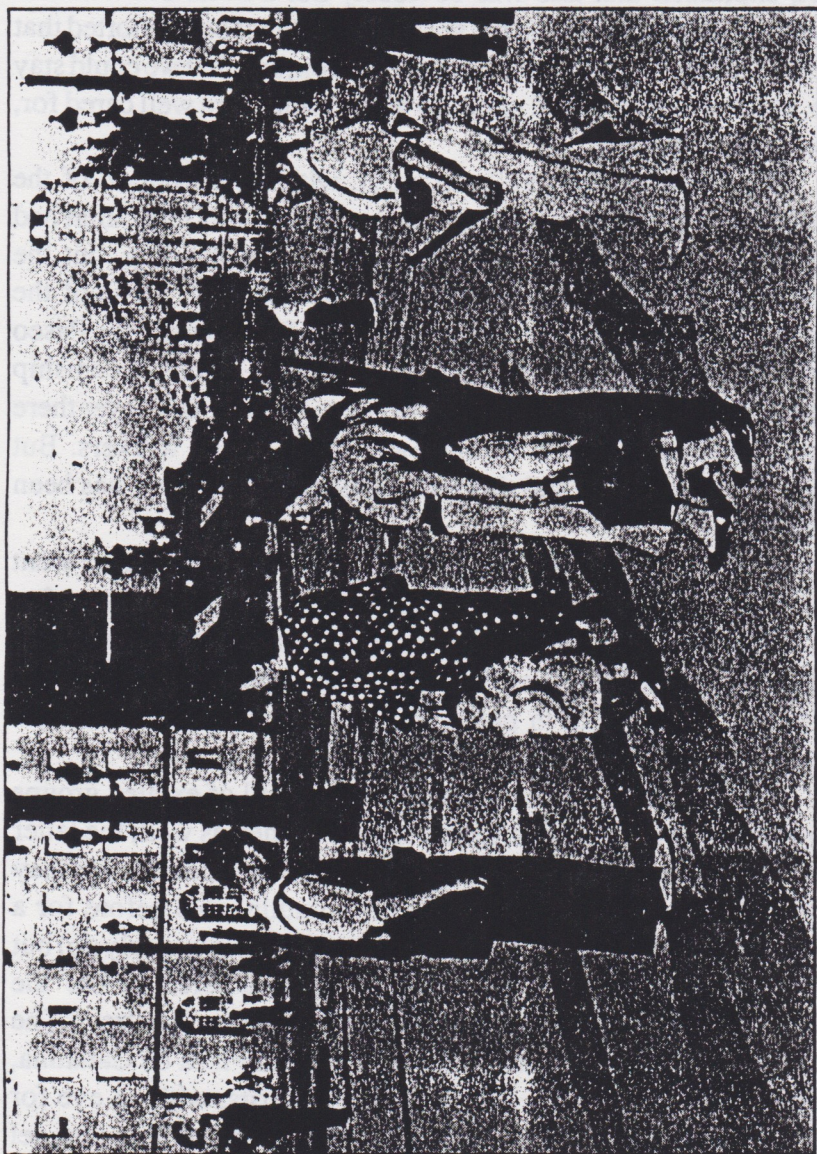
In many respects, however, life was much less disturbed than I expected it to be after newspaper reports abroad. Tramways and buses were running, water and light functioning. At the door of the Hotel Continental stood an anarchist guard; and a large number of militia had been billeted in the rooms. Our driver, with a gesture of regret, explained that this was obviously not a hotel but a militia barrack, but the manager and the anarchist guards at once retorted that not all the rooms were occupied by militia-men, and that we could stay there, at somewhat reduced rates. So we did, and were well cared for, as to food and service.

All the churches had been burnt, with the exception of the cathedral with its invaluable art treasures, which the Generalitat had managed to save. The walls of the churches are standing, but the interior has in every case been completely destroyed. Some of the churches are still smoking. At the corner of the Ramblas and the Paseo Colon the building of the Cosulich Line (the Italian steamship company) is in ruins; Italian snipers, we are told, had taken cover there and the building had been stormed and burnt by the workers. But except for the churches and this one secular building there has been no arson.

These were the first impressions. After a hasty dinner I went out again, in spite of warnings that the streets would not be safe after dark. I did not see any confirmation of this. Life, as usual in Barcelona, was even more seething after nine o'clock at night. True, the turmoil now abated earlier than in peace times, and long before midnight streets were empty.

Now when I went out the streets were full of excited groups of young men in arms, and not a few armed women as well; the latter behaving with a self-assurance unusual for Spanish women when they appear in public (and it would have been unthinkable before for a Spanish girl to appear in trousers, as the militia-girls invariably do) but with decency. Particularly numerous groups gathered before the fashionable buildings now requisitioned as party centres. The enormous Hotel Colon, dominating the splendid Plaza de Cataluna, has been taken over by the PSUC. The anarchists, with an eye for striking contrasts, have expropriated the offices of the Fomento del Trabajo Nacional, in the fashionable Calle Layetana. The Trotskyists have settled down in the Hotel Falcon, on the Ramblas. A tremendous







group of cars and motor-lorries, with one or two armoured cars, was standing before the door of their newly acquired offices, and a group of young people in arms was standing about, in excited and eager discussion.

I do not understand Catalan. I was glad to hear German spoken. In this atmosphere of general enthusiasm there is no difficulty in talking to anybody. I soon discover that one of the militia-women in the group is the wife of a Swiss newspaper correspondent, and now I can begin to gather 'stories'. The care to find out whether they are true or not will come later.

It is interesting to listen to what these Marxists say about the anarchists. Immediately after the defeat of the military, they explain, there was quite a lot of looting in the Ramblas, on the pretence of anarchist action. Then the CNT interfered, disclaiming any responsibility for these acts; now, the first thing that catches the eye on the walls of the houses are big anarchist posters menacing every looter with execution on the spot. But there are other tales, of a more surprising character. In sacking and burning the churches, the militia made a considerable loot in money and valuable objects. This loot should properly have gone to the CNT. It did not, however; but the anarchist rank and file themselves preferred to burn the stuff wholesale, including bank-notes, in order to allay any suspicion of robbery. The question of anarchist criminality, settled in such a sweeping manner by our Esquerra and PSUC friends in the train, seems really to be somewhat complex.

On my way home I saw the burning of a church, and again it was a big surprise. I imagined it would be an act of almost demonic excitement of the mob, and it proved to be an administrative business. The burning church stood in a corner of the big Plaza de Catalunya. Flames were devouring it rapidly. A small group of people stood about (it was about 11 P.M.) silently watching, certainly not regretting the burning, but as certainly not very excited by the matter. The fire brigade did service at the spot, carefully limiting the flames to the church and protecting the surrounding buildings; nobody was allowed to come near the burning church - in order to avoid accidents - and to this regulation people submitted with surprising docility. Earlier church burnings must have been more passionate, I suppose.



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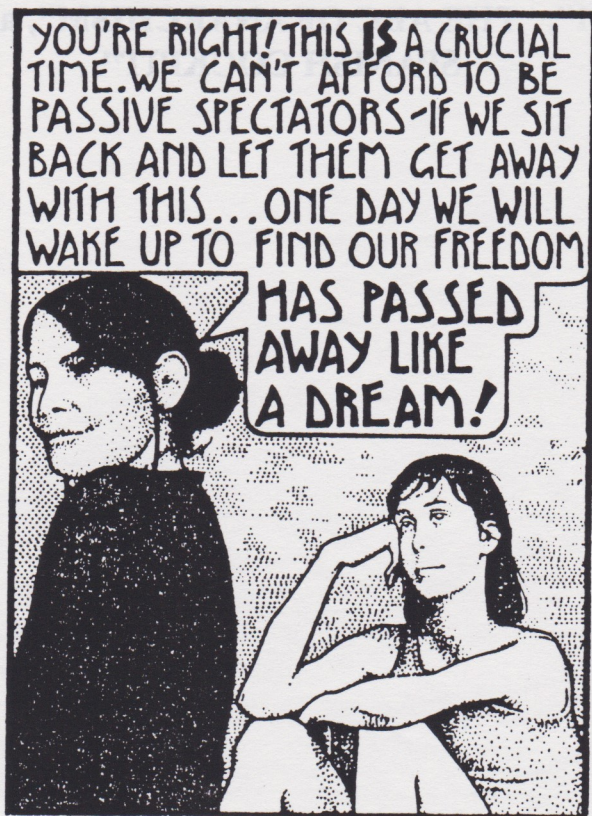
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